

of belief. 3•But now that the belief has come, we are no longer under a caretaker.

3:23–25

§ 2 • Belief In Jesus Renders One Free From the Law

§ 2.1 • Since His Belief In Jesus Makes Him An Heir of the Promised Blessing, The Jesus-Believer Is Free From the Mosaic Covenant

PART 10

19 Now **all** of you are sons of God through your belief in Messiah Jesus. 2•For as many of you as have been baptized into the *messiah* have “put on” the *messiah*. (3•There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free man, neither male nor female. 4•Indeed, all of you are one and the same in Messiah Jesus.) 5•And, if you belong to the *messiah*, you are thereby the “seed” of Abraham, heirs in accord with the promise.

3:26–29

20 Now I say—as long as the heir is a little child—although he is master over everything, he does not differ at all from a slave. 2•Indeed, he is under caregivers and managers up to the age set by the father. 3•So also with us—when we were “little children” under the elements of the Jewish religious system,<sup>13</sup> we were in bondage. 4•But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Covenant, in order that he might redeem those who were under the Covenant—with the result that we received our placement as sons.

4:1–5

21 And because *you* are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into *your* hearts. 2•This shouts out that the Father is your *Abba*. 3• As a result, *you* are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then indeed an heir through an act of God.

4:6–7

22 Now, indeed, back then, because you did not know God, you were in bondage to what were not even gods by nature. 2•But now, having come to know God—or rather, having come to

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13. “. . .under the elements of the Jewish religious system” translates ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου [*hupo ta stoicheia tou kosmou*]. Contrary to more common English translations of this phrase in this context, it is not referring to elemental principles of the world (or cosmos). Rather, Paul is referring to the various elements of the system of religious observances that constitute the Jewish religion of his day. And, since the Jewish religion of his day is based upon the various requirements of *Torah*, he is referring to the various elements of the system of religious observances required by the Mosaic Covenant.

be known by God—how is it that you turn back again to the impotent and impoverished elements of religious observance<sup>14</sup> in which you desire to live in bondage all over again? 3•You observe days and months and seasons and years. 4•I fear for you that, perhaps, I have labored over you in vain. 5•I beg of you, brothers, become as I, for I have become as you.

4:8–12a

§ 2.2 • Parenthetical Comment Expressing How Perplexed Paul Is by the Galatians' Current Disregard for His Perspective

#### PART 11

23 You did not wrong me in any respect. 2•You know that I proclaimed the good news to you the first time on account of a physical ailment. 3•But this ailment, this test of you in my body, you did not look down on it, nor did you hold it in contempt. 4•Instead, you received me as a messenger from God, as Messiah Jesus. 5•So where is your sense of good fortune now? 6•For I bear witness with regard to you that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. 7• By embracing the truth among you, have I, as a result, become your enemy?

4:12b–16

24 They eagerly want you to join them. 2•But it is not well! 3•To the contrary, they wish to *shut you out* so that you will eagerly want to join them. 4•However, it is a good thing to be eagerly wanted for a good reason. 5•At all times, and not only when I am present with you, you are my children, with whom I again suffer birth pains until a complete grasp of the *messiah* is formed in you. 6•I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, because I am baffled by you.

4:17–20

§ 2.3 • Description—By Way of Allegory—Of the Two Kinds of Jews Among Paul's Contemporaries

#### PART 12

25 Tell me, you who want to be under *Torah*, do you not listen to the *Torah*? 2•It is, in fact, written<sup>15</sup> that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and one by the free woman. 3•Now, indeed, while the son by the slave woman was born to Abraham in accord with physical descent, yet the son by the free woman was born to Abraham in keeping with the promise.

4:21–23

14. Here the noun phrase “elements of religious observance” is being used to translate the one Greek noun, *stoicheia*.

15. What follows is not a citation of any statement that can be found in the scriptures. Rather, it is a statement of fact devised by Paul that is based on the accounts in *Genesis*. Cf. especially, *Genesis* 16:15 and *Genesis* 21:2 in the context of their respective narratives.

- 26 Here is what these things are when they have been made into an allegory:<sup>16</sup> 2•These women are two covenants. 3•One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children who are to be in slavery. 4•This one is Hagar. 5•This Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia. 6•And she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. 7•But the Jerusalem above is free. 8•This one is *our* mother. 9•Now it is written, “*Be overjoyed, barren woman who is not bearing children! Burst out and shout, you who are not suffering birth pains! Because the children of the desolate woman will be more numerous than the children of the one who has a husband.*”<sup>17</sup>
- 4:24–27
- 27 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of the promise. 2•But just as, at that time, the one who was born by way of physical descent persecuted the one who was born by way of the Spirit, so is it now also. 3•But what does the Scripture say? 4•“Kick out the slave woman and her son. 5•Indeed, the son of the slave woman will certainly not inherit with the son of the free woman.”<sup>18</sup>
- 4:28–30
- 28 So then, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. 2•The *messiah* set us free from condemnation into freedom from the demands of the Covenant. 3•Keep standing firm, therefore, and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.
- 4:31–5:1

§ 3 • Concluding Exhortation to Gentiles to Resist the False Teachers

### PART 13

- 29 Look, I, Paul, say to you that, if you get circumcised, the *messiah* will in no way benefit you. 2•And what’s more, I testify to every man who gets circumcised that he becomes a person under obligation to do the whole Covenant. 3•Whichever ones among you seek to be considered *dikaïos* on the basis of the Mosaic Covenant, you have been alienated from the *messiah*. 4•You have fallen away from his grace. 5•But we, in our spirit—by reason of our

16. Literally, “Whatsoever things they are, being allegorized—...” Here, Paul is signaling the fact that he is about to create an allegory out of the elements of the *Genesis* accounts that tell of Sarah, Hagar and their sons. Paul is not for a moment suggesting that the intended, authoritative meaning of these *Genesis* accounts is to be found by construing them as an allegory. Neither the human author of these *Genesis* accounts nor God who inspired them was intending for the reader to read them as an allegory. They are, rather, straightforward historical accounts. Paul is telling his Galatian readers here that—for his own purposes—he is going to draw on the elements of those *Genesis* accounts to create an allegory of his own making. In other words, Paul is not *interpreting* the *Genesis* accounts here; rather, he is *exploiting* the *Genesis* accounts to articulate a point that arises out of his own understanding and from his own authority.

17. *Isaiah* 54:1.

18. This is not a verbatim citation of any particular statement in the Scripture. It is a statement composed by Paul to capture the essence of what was, in effect, said to Abraham by God. Cf. especially *Genesis* 21:10–12.

# HANDOUT #12

Reformation Fellowship

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## The “Allegory” in *Galatians*, Part 12

[Gal. 4:21–5:1]

Paul is often said to have interpreted the Old Testament allegorically in *Galatians* 4:21–5:1. But that is *not* the case:

- A. In the first place, Paul is not **interpreting** the *Genesis* account in this part of *Galatians*. Paul is not suggesting that he has discovered the true, deeper meaning of the *Genesis* account (neither a meaning put there by God, who inspired the scriptural text, nor a meaning put into the text by its human author). To the contrary, Paul is using the facts and elements of the narrative in *Genesis* to suggest how they could be utilized as a sort of allegory. Paul (as an apostle of Jesus the Messiah) purports to have a true and accurate understanding of the state of Judaism in his own day. And, here in Part 12, he suggests that his understanding of the state of Judaism in relation to God’s purposes can be expressed “allegorically” using the elements of the *Genesis* accounts of Sarah and Hagar.
- B. Secondly, Paul does not create a fully-developed allegory here in Part 12. At least, we do not find anything in Part 12 that looks the way we would expect a fully-developed allegory to look. Rather, he seems to be outlining how two different women from the *Genesis* narratives—Sarah and Hagar—could be aptly construed as symbols of two different ways of being a Jew. Hagar can aptly symbolize the way of being a Jew that is centered in the Mosaic Covenant. And Sarah can aptly symbolize the way of being a Jew that is centered in the New Covenant. So, Paul’s “allegory” consists of his putting forth Sarah and Hagar as symbols or allegorical representatives of two different covenants which form the basis of two different kinds of Judaism.

The table on the next two pages below displays how these two women can serve as apt symbols of these two covenants:

<b>HISTORICAL FACTS</b>			
Hagar		Sarah	
slave woman {Gal. 4:22 = ¶25.2}		free woman {Gal. 4:22 = ¶25.2}	
her child was related to Abraham merely by physical descent {Gal. 4:23 = ¶25.3}		her child was related to Abraham as a fulfillment of the promise made to him and as an heir of the promises made to him {Gal. 4:23 = ¶25.3}	
<b>HISTORICAL FACTS CONSTRUED AS SYMBOLS (ALLEGORIES)</b> {Gal. 4:24a = ¶26.1}			
HISTORICAL FACT	APT SYMBOL OF...	HISTORICAL FACT	APT SYMBOL OF...
Hagar	Mosaic Covenant given at Mt. Sinai {Gal. 4:24–25a = ¶26.2–26.5}	Sarah	“New” Covenant* {implicit in Gal. 4:24a = ¶26.2}
her child was a slave	those who look to the Mosaic Covenant (given at Mt. Sinai) for God’s acceptance are slaves (they have to do whatever the Law requires)  {Gal. 4:24b, 25b = ¶26.3, 26.6}	her child was a free man	those who look to the New Covenant* for God’s acceptance are free (they do not have to do everything the Law requires)  {Gal. 4:26, 31 = ¶26.7–26.8, 28.1}
her child, Ishmael, was not destined to inherit the blessing of Abraham	those who look to the Mosaic Covenant for God’s acceptance will not inherit the blessing of Abraham (eternal Life)  {Gal. 4:30b = ¶27.5}	her child, Isaac, was destined to inherit the blessing of Abraham	those who look to the New Covenant* for God’s acceptance will inherit the blessing of Abraham (eternal Life)  {Gal. 4:28, 30b = ¶27.1, 27.5}
her child (Ishmael) persecuted the child of promise (Isaac)	those who look to the Mosaic Covenant for God’s acceptance persecute those who look to the New Covenant* for God’s acceptance  {Gal. 4:29 = ¶27.2}	her child, the child of the promise, (Isaac) was persecuted by the child of the slave woman, who was not the child of promise (Ishmael)	those who look to the New Covenant* for God’s acceptance are persecuted by those who look to the Mosaic Covenant for God’s acceptance  {Gal. 4:29 = ¶27.2}

PAUL’S ASSESSMENT OF HIS CONTEMPORANEOUS SITUATION	
The Symbolic / Allegorical “Hagar”	The Symbolic / Allegorical “Sarah”
Those Jews who reject the gospel (the New Covenant*) are children of “Hagar” (the Mosaic Covenant)	Those Jews who embrace the gospel (the New Covenant*) are children of “Sarah” (the New Covenant*)
These children of “Hagar” amount to the majority of the population of the present Jerusalem  {Gal. 4:25, 27 = ¶26.6, 26.9}	These children of “Sarah” amount to the majority of the population of the future Jerusalem that God will bring into being in fulfillment of his promises  {implied in Gal. 4:26–27 = ¶26.7–26.9}
The prophet Isaiah predicts a time in the future when these children of “Hagar” will be few or non-existent  {Gal. 4:27 = ¶26.9}	The prophet Isaiah predicts a time in the future when these children of “Sarah” will be many in number  {Gal. 4:27 = ¶26.9}

\***New Covenant** > In this part of *Galatians*, Paul says the two women (Hagar and Sarah) can allegorically represent two covenants. It is clear that one of the covenants is the Mosaic Covenant. Paul never makes explicit what the second covenant is. However, from the context of his argument in *Galatians*, it is clear that the second covenant that he has in view is the “New Covenant.” And, by the “New Covenant,” here is what I mean:

The “New Covenant” is the “new” basis upon which one can expect to receive divine mercy that is proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus the Messiah. Namely, according to the gospel of Jesus (as proclaimed by Paul), the basis of divine mercy (and salvation) is the intercession and advocacy of Jesus the Messiah on behalf of those who belong to him. Jesus, in obedience to his Father, went to the cross to die a death that represented what each of us sinful human beings deserves. If I embrace this meaning of his death as true and if I believe that Jesus is who he says he is (the Messiah) and if I choose to define my existence by my relationship to him, then he will claim me as his own. He will count me as belonging to him. And here is the promise he made: if I belong to him, he will appeal to God to grant me mercy. So, the one who looks to the New Covenant to find acceptance from God is the one who expects to be granted mercy from God because of Jesus’ intercession on his behalf. The one who looks to the Mosaic Covenant to find acceptance from God is the one who expects to be granted mercy from God because of his obedience to all that the Law of Moses requires—including the prescribed animal sacrifices offered up for his sins.